

WEST DES MOINES HUMAN RIGHTS COMMISSION MEETING

Thursday, December 11, 2014

Commissioners Present: Ila Plasencia, Bernell Edwards, Sanjita Pradhan, Frank Harty

Commissioners Absent: Justine Morton

Staff Representatives: Althea Holcomb

Guests: A student from Merrill Middle School observed

Call to order: Meeting was called to order at 4:00 p.m.

1. Roll Call

2. Approval of October Minutes

3. Opportunity for Public to Address the Commission

- No requests

3. Chair Report

- In light of Justine's absence, Althea led the meeting. Current packet information was reviewed.

5. Staff Report

- Althea reported that no funds had been spent this fiscal year. The Commission approved being a sponsor for the Human Rights Symposium

6. Report on Human Rights Phone Line

- No calls to report.

7. Report from Commissioners on recent activities

- Ila attended the Friends of Iowa Civil Rights Luncheon. She is also representing West Des Moines Human Rights on the committee for the Symposium. She attended the Latino Forum in Ankeny. She will be attending the League of Iowa Human and Civil Rights Agencies meeting.
- Bernell has been asked to serve on the Iowa Civil Rights Commission.

8. Old Business

- None discussed.

9. New Business

- The Commissioners discussed the need for a more diverse police force. Bernell stated that his experience has led him to believe that relatives are discouraging local African American kids from becoming police officers. It also appears that Latino Police Officers are home grown. This led to a discussion about individuals of color not wanting to come to West Des Moines from Des Moines

because West Des Moines is viewed as very white and very discriminatory. A suggestion was made to take pictures of some of the commissioners and put them on the website with a caption that says "I'm West Des Moines." Underneath would be the phone number for the Human Rights Commission. Althea agreed to pursue this idea.

10. Next Meeting Date

- The next meeting will be held on Thursday, February 12, 2015.

Adjourn: The meeting adjourned at 5:00 pm.

Notetaker: Althea Holcomb